

CHAPTER 1 - PLANNING HISTORY AND GOALS

■ INTRODUCTION

The Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission of Fauquier County realized some thirty years ago that the continual increase of the County's population would require adequate planning in order to offset the impacts of development. As a result, they initiated a formal planning process and adopted regulations that would govern the manner in which land in Fauquier County would be developed. The formal planning process has culminated in this, and three previous, Comprehensive Plans. The first Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1967 the second in 1977, and the third in 1989 (see Significant Dates in Fauquier County Planning, Appendix A). Development in Fauquier County is guided by the following: the Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Ordinance, the Subdivision Ordinance, and the Building Code. Development must also comply with regulations of State agencies including the Health Department, Water Control Board, and Department of Transportation, as well as various federal agencies.

Throughout Fauquier County's planning history, the acknowledged importance of traditional agricultural uses, rural lifestyles, historic sites and areas, unique open spaces, and preservation of the environment has shaped the County's planning goals and guided development. These goals have been incorporated in various forms in this and the previous Comprehensive Plans and are discussed in detail in Appendix A.

As a part of the 1992-2010 Plan Review, the Board of Supervisors appointed a fifteen member Plan Review Advisory Committee (PRAC) to assist the Planning Commission with the update of the Comprehensive Plan. Each of the five Magisterial Districts was represented by three citizens. The PRAC's function was to serve as a conduit for information and input from the citizens to the Planning Commission and vice versa.

■ EXTENSION OF PLANNING PERIOD FROM 10 TO 20 YEARS

During the current update of the Comprehensive Plan, it was determined that the planning period should be extended from ten to twenty years; the new plan would be in effect until the year 2010. The twenty year planning period was adopted to facilitate planning for public utilities, facilities, and transportation. By providing a longer planning period, and a time phased plan, the County will be able to more effectively address the lifecycle costs of public facilities and utilities. The County will also be able to better evaluate public improvements as part of proffered rezonings and/or impact fee assessments using a twenty year planning period.

■ 1992-2010 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN GOALS

The Board of Supervisors met in retreat in January 1992 to review and recertify the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The goals from the 1987- 1997 Comprehensive Plan remained intact with the exception of Goal #6.

This goal was revised to express the commitment to provide public facilities and utilities through public and private cooperation in only those areas presently being served by utilities. This differed from the 1987-1997 version which gave priority to "extending water and sewer to those Service Districts presently without such services."

The goals that have been adopted for this 1992- 2010 Plan are as follows:

1. To sustain and enhance the quality of life of the County's citizens.
2. To recognize the County's traditionally agricultural and rural character and the need for preservation of its open spaces and scenic beauty.
3. To protect critical environmental resources and to maintain renewable natural resources so that they are not degraded but remain viable for future generations.
4. To protect and promote the agricultural industry.
5. To concentrate and guide growth in and around Service Districts and Villages.
6. To plan for necessary public facilities and utilities through public and private cooperation within those areas presently containing services, and to establish priorities for service implementation in the areas presently not served.
7. To encourage economic development which will result in a net tax benefit, create needed job opportunities, and support the other adopted goals.
8. To affect economical and efficient use of public funds by planning for a rate of growth which will achieve the goals of the County and will not exceed the ability of the County to provide services to its citizens.
9. To encourage through zoning and other means the opportunity for development of a full range of dwelling types to meet housing needs.
10. To encourage development of a transportation system to provide efficient movement of through traffic on arterials and highways and within Service Districts and Villages while preserving existing rural road character and causing a minimal impact on the environmental quality and scenic nature of the County.

Note: On December 7, 1993 the Fauquier County Board of Supervisors passed by unanimous vote a resolution regarding the provision of public water and sewer service to the New Baltimore, Catlett, Calverton, and Midland Service Districts. The resolution included the following three points:

- That the Board of Supervisors states that it is the goal of this Board to provide public water and sewer services to the New Baltimore, Catlett, Calverton, and Midland Service Districts as soon as possible in keeping with the revised Comprehensive Plan;
- That the Boards policy shall be to assist, promote and implement this goal through all fiscally prudent means, including public-private partnerships, prior to the year 2000, the Board realizing that this policy will necessitate careful planning of growth patterns to integrate these service districts together into a comprehensive utility system; and;
- That the goal of public services in those service districts shall enjoy one of the highest priorities of the Board and all of the County's Boards, Commissions, Authorities, Departments, and employees.

■ SUMMARY OF PLANNING HISTORY

1967 Comprehensive Plan

Beginning in 1961, the Board of Supervisors held public hearings to determine the goals that the first Comprehensive Plan should encompass. To assist the Planning Commission in drafting the Plan, the Board adopted "policy guidelines" and "objectives" in 1961 and again in 1964. The resulting Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1967.

1972 Plan Revision -Rivkin/Carson Report

In 1972 the County retained the private firm of Rivkin/Carson to examine the 1967-2000 Plan. Numerous meetings with County Officials and interviews with the public resulted in a discussion paper which was reviewed by County Officials and the public. Feedback from the parties involved resulted in a report which was "a review and policy document intended to accompany the Plan and to stand as a 1972 assessment of its principles and prescriptions and as a guide to subsequent County implementation action."

1975 Plan Revision

The 1975 Comprehensive Plan review process revisited the objectives adopted by the Board in 1973, in response to the Rivkin/Carson report. The Board concluded that these objectives needed to be revised and that policies would be required in the areas of basic planning, conservation, development guidance, economic growth, and housing. As a result, policy statements were drafted for each of these categories.

1977 Plan Revision

The 1977 Plan revision was in response to several factors. The first was the state of the economy as a result of the recession. The second was a change in demographics within the County. The third was the incompatibility of certain aspects of the 1967 Plan with the two previous factors. Finally, the 1977 Plan was revised to reflect the objectives and policies that were adopted in 1972 and 1975. In the 1977 Plan, the more closely defined objectives suggested by Rivkin/Carson-to preserve the County's historic, agricultural character, its natural beauty, and sensitive environmental areas-were combined with land capability analyses of soils, slopes, scenic areas, and water-supply potential. This resulted in the adoption of the County's Land Use Plan. New rural residential, village, and settlement areas were also delineated.

1981 Chapter VIII Revision

The 1981 revision was the result of our analysis of population and land use trends, and the adoption of a ten-year planning period. The desire to preserve valuable agricultural lands and the concomitant realization of constraints to providing utilities to the service districts, led to other revisions in the proposed general land use plan.

1986 Rural Land Use Plan Revision

During the 1986 review of the Rural Land Use Plan, the Planning Commission discovered an acceleration in the platting of rural subdivisions. Under the Board of Supervisor's direction, the Commission began to analyze the effectiveness of the County's Land Use Plan and regulatory ordinances in directing residential growth away from the rural areas and into the Service Districts. In addition, the Board asked the Commission for a detailed analysis of the Service Districts. The analysis was to include information on the Service Districts' reserve holding capacity, utility service deficiencies, and the potential cost to upgrade services or expand the districts.

The Commission's analysis of the general growth trends led to revisions of the Rural Land Use Plan. The report recommended reducing the maximum allowable residential density in the Rural Agriculture zone from one dwelling unit per five acres to one dwelling unit per ten acres. The report also recommended that the density allowed by-right in the Rural Agricultural zones be increased from three acres per parcel to a number determined by a sliding-scale based on the number of acres in a tract of land.

1987-1997 Comprehensive Plan Goals

Development of the 1987 planning goals was strongly influenced by the County's physiography, its agricultural tradition and heritage, and the commitment of its residents to the preservation of open space and the environment. It is perhaps most important to note that the basic tenets of the objectives (goals) adopted in 1973 and used in the 1977 Plan remained intact in the 1987-1997 Goals.

1988 Plan Revision

In 1988, the County adopted a revised Comprehensive Plan for the next five and ten year planning period.